DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 466 705 SP 040 961

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TITLE	Supervision in Restructured Alberta: Policy Learning, Shifting Images and Professional Growth.
PUB DATE	2002-04-03
NOTE	39p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 1-5, 2002).
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Educational Change; *Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; Faculty Development; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Teacher Evaluation; Teacher Improvement; *Teacher Supervision
IDENTIFIERS	Alberta

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on Alberta, Canada's 1998 "Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation" policy, examining its origins and adoption along with the significant shift in images of teaching and supervision that it conveys. Both the process and substance of the policy are analyzed within the context of Alberta's larger plan to restructure education during the 1990s. Following an overview of the larger study upon which this paper is based, five key conceptual issues are addressed in a review of relevant literature (e.g., policy cycles and policy learning, successful educational reform, policies to encourage quality teaching, teacher supervision and evaluation and images of practice). The next two sections review aspects of the origin and adoption phases of this policy change. The paper discusses the image of policy change as learning and notes a metaphor of reform as capacity building. It concludes that this policy serves as an exemplary model for future educational reform. (Contains 148 references.) (SM)

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Supervision in Restructured Alberta

Policy Learning, Shifting Images and Professional Growth

ED 466 705

A Paper Presented to Division L, Section 6
AERA Annual Meeting
New Orleans, Louisiana
April 3, 2002

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Supervision in Restructured Alberta

Policy Learning, Shifting Images and Professional Growth

> Quality teaching occurs when the teacher's analysis of the context, and the pedagogical knowledge and abilities the teacher decides to apply result in students having the best possible opportunity to learn.
>
> The *Teacher Growth Supervision and Evaluation* policy reflects a major change in philosophy about supervision and evaluation. It reflects a professional model based on teacher growth rather than teacher deficiency. The policy takes seriously the professionalization of teaching.

The two quotations above present an encouraging picture of education in the Canadian province of Alberta at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The first is the Ministry of Education's *Teaching Quality Standard* as delineated in its *Program Policy Manual* (2001). From my perspective, it conveys the metaphor of the teacher as a judgement-based, reflective professional. The second quotation is an introductory statement to the Alberta Teachers' Association handbook *Teacher Supervision: A Workshop* (2001). It portrays the supervisor as a supportive, growth-oriented leader. These notions of professional, judgement-based teaching and supportive, collegial supervision are two dominant images that arise from the government's strategy to improve teaching deriving from its 1996 planning document *An Integrated Framework to Enhance the Quality of Teaching in Alberta: A Policy Position Paper*. On the basis of this position paper the Progressive Conservative government worked with other members of the educational policy sub-system to legislate changes in four interrelated areas: (1) quality teaching, (2) teacher preparation, (3) teacher certification and (4) teacher evaluation. These changes designed to "guide, encourage and support teachers' professional growth throughout their careers" (Alberta, 1996, p.2) occurred within a broader context of government reform that followed the election of Ralph Klein to the office of provincial premier in the fall of 1993. This comprehensive restructuring program is often referred to as the "Klein Revolution" (Lisac, 1995).

Considerable scholarly attention has been paid to the large number of similar mandated education reform efforts undertaken across the industrialized world over the past decade. The body of literature devoted to Alberta's restructuring program is in itself quite large. Though policy researchers differ by degree in their assessments of the overall impact of such sweeping initiatives, a consensus view is that such approaches have not been very effective (Levin, 2001; Hargreaves and Fullan, 1998; Kuchapski, 1997; Ginsberg and Berry, 1997). Similar conclusions have been drawn from analysis of the impact of the Alberta restructuring package (Taylor, 2001; Townsend, 1998; Burger et al, 2000; Aitken and Townsend, 1998; Webber, 1995). Initiatives that focus more directly on teaching and learning and conceive of "reform as capacity-building" are more likely to succeed (Levin, 2001; Hargreaves and Fullan, 1998). Reforms to teacher education, certification, professional growth, supervision and evaluation

adopted by the Alberta Ministry of Learning as one component of the provincial restructuring plan may prove to be a valuable illustration of this more effective orientation to policy change.

Alberta Learning's *Teacher Growth Supervision and Evaluation* policy is the focus of this paper. Its origins and adoption are examined along with the significant shift in the images of teaching and supervision that it conveys. Both the process and the substance of the policy are analyzed within the context of the province's larger plan to restructure education during the 1990s. Following an overview of the larger study upon which the paper is based, five key conceptual issues are addressed in a review of relevant literature. The next two sections review aspects of the origins and adoption phases of this policy change. In the concluding section lessons that can be drawn from this analysis are presented.

THE STUDY

The work reported here is a significant portion of the first phase of my doctoral research into *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* policy. At this stage the study relies on five data sources: (1) original government documents (policy statements, committee minutes, policy papers and media releases), (2) written materials from school jurisdictions and non-governmental organizations, (3) interviews with selected members of the provincial educational policy sub-system, (4) scholarly literature and (5) reflections based on my personal experience as a school system leader involved in the evolution of this policy from conception to adoption. In phase two of my doctoral work to follow I will look more closely at the implementation and outcomes of the policy. Sixteen representative school jurisdictions will be visited. School and jurisdiction policies will be reviewed. Perspectives will be sought from principals and members of the superintendency in these systems.

CONCEPTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Conceptual foundations for this analysis are derived from five strands of research, which are now addressed in the literature review, which comprises this section of the paper. The overriding framework used to structure this policy study is outlined first. It derives from recent conceptions of policy cycles and policy learning. Characteristics of successful educational reform are then reviewed. A third strand reveals policy approaches found to be supportive of quality teaching. Findings from recent research on teacher supervision and evaluation make up the fourth strand. In the final part of this conceptual portion of the paper literature on prevalent images of teaching and supervision is presented.

Policy Cycles and Policy Learning

Levin's (2001) four-stage model of the policy cycle is the primary organizing framework used to structure my study. The four stages of this model are presented following brief coverage of conceptions of policy development from Howlett & Ramish (1995) and Pal (1997). Discussion then turns to academic work on policy change and policy learning highlighting the contributions of Howlett & Ramish (1995); Bennett and Howlett (1992); Rose (1993); May (1992), Mitchell (1994) and Hall (1993).

Within Leslie Pal's applied problem-solving approach to the study of policy in the Canadian context public policy is defined as " a course of action or inaction chosen by public authorities to address a given problem or interrelated problems" (1997, pp. 1-2). While acknowledging that various perspectives compete for prominence in the discipline of policy analysis, Pal favors the rational model. "Not because it can stand on its own, but because it provides a powerful heuristic tool, or guide, to thinking through and trying to come to grips with solutions" (p. 26). Pal sees policy analysis as the "disciplined application of intellect to public problems" (p. 28) involving four phases. Since policy making is largely focused on solving public problems, considerable emphasis is placed on the first phase: problem definition. Policy design, implementation and evaluation are the other three phases in Pal's conception.

Howlett and Ramish (1995) take the position that applied problem-solving models that utilize a stage conception of the policy process require cautious application. They remind us that such models imply a policy process that is much more linear, rational, sequential and disaggregated than is actually the case given the complex, turbulent and idiosyncratic nature of political reality. The need to identify key policy actors, their interests and prominent ideas at each phase is underscored. Diligence in the application of stage models is required in their view, so that conclusions are derived from empirical inquiry rather than through adherence to intellectually satisfying yet not-necessarily data-driven abstract schema. Recognition of the highly contingent and complex nature of political decision-making is a major component of their stance. Movement away from traditional linear-rational interpretations of the policy cycle towards "a more nuanced position on the investigation and conceptualization of the public policy process reflects a general recent trend toward 'post-positivist' modes of analysis in the policy science as a whole" (p. 201).

Benjamin Levin (2001) acknowledges that "the specific delimitation of stages is arbitrary and a matter of personal preference" (p. 19). Like Howlett and Ramish, however, he values using the policy cycle approach as an analytical tool. He then outlines a simplified four-stage model, which I have chosen to frame this study. Stage one in Levin's conception is *origins*, it focuses on the source of reform as initially proposed. Roles played by various actors as well as the interests and ideas represented are featured in this dimension. Stage two is *adoption*. What happens between an initial proposal and its final approval is the focus here. Stage three is *implementation*, which involves movement from policy to practice. The final stage is *outcomes*, which looks at the effects of the changes. Levin is careful to state that any such categorization of the policy process is designed to provide assistance to the analyst rather than attempting to accurately reflect the ambiguous social reality within which policy decisions are made. The first two of his categories have been selected to guide my discussion of the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* policy in this paper. Levin's model fits well as a heuristic device to illuminate and reflect on the processes at work in the development of the Alberta government's integrated approach to policy change in the areas of teacher education, certification, professional growth, supervision and evaluation.

Similarly, the concept of policy learning is helpful in making sense of the origins and adoption of the policy. Main themes from an emerging body of literature on policy learning are applicable. Howlett and Ramish (1995) summarize key elements of this literature and draw

linkages to concepts of policy evaluation and policy change. Moreover, their analysis builds on earlier work by Bennett and Howlett (1992) to synthesize ideas developed by Rose (1993) May (1992) and Hall (1993). While Howlett and Ramish view policy learning as a complex concept with a variety of meanings, their significant contribution to the field (and to the conceptualization of my study) is the proposition that there are two distinguishable types of policy learning: *endogenous learning* and *exogenous learning* (p 176).

The first conception, *endogenous learning*, stems from the work of Richard Rose (1993) and is also known as *lesson-drawing*. For the most part endogenous learning takes place among small, sub-system policy networks. As Howlett and Ramish (1995) describe it, this type of learning

> originates within formal policy process and affects the choice and means or technique employed by policy-makers in their efforts to achieve their goals. These lessons are likely to concern practical suggestions about different aspects of the policy cycle as it has operated in the past-- for example, which policy instruments have 'succeeded' in which circumstances and which have 'failed', or which issues have enjoyed public support in the agenda-setting process and which issues have not.
>
> (p. 176)

The second type, *exogenous learning*, derives from the work of Peter Hall (1993) and is also referred to as *social learning*. This is a more general form of learning, which occurs across large, publicly participative policy communities. Exogenous learning often involves rethinking the principles underlying the policy. "It originates outside the policy process and affects the constraints or capacities of policy-makers to alter or change society" (Howlett and Ramish, 1995, p. 176). Now that the conceptual foundations in the policy dimension of this study have been outlined, attention turns to the expanding research base on the topic of successful educational reform.

Successful Educational Reform

Alberta's *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* policy came forward as one part of a much larger educational reform agenda. For this reason it is instructive to review findings from a growing number of studies that have inquired into the nature of educational reform and the conditions under which reforms are more likely to achieve governments' goals. This portion of the paper explores the question: What have we learned about successful educational restructuring? In the final decade of the twentieth century an unprecedented series of changes to educational provision were conceived, adopted and implemented by governments in many industrialized states. This section looks at what researchers have learned through systematic analysis of these reform campaigns. Discussion begins by clarifying what is meant by educational reform in the context of this study. Research findings from selected studies are then synthesized.

For the purposes of this study the terms *education reform* and *education restructuring* are used interchangeably. Other scholars take a similar approach. Clive Dimmock (1996)

comments: "At the heart of the concept of "restructuring' lies the recognition of the need for fundamental reform." (p. 137).

Unfortunately (as noted earlier), many restructuring programs fail to achieve desired impacts. Reform strategies can be divided into two somewhat opposing categories (Mawhinney, 1997; Hargreaves and Fullan, 1998; Lieberman and Miller, 2000; Barth, 1990; Levin 2001). On the one hand are externally driven, mandated programs. An implied assumption in these approaches, according to Mawhinney (1997), is that "educators have the capacity to respond to reforms by changing practices only if they are provoked by externally (and often centrally) imposed mandates, policies and directives" (p. 95). In the other category are capacity-building restructuring strategies. These are founded on the understanding that policy-makers must pay more attention to the perspectives of those in the field. In the end it is their "street-level" commitment and actions that determine the success or failure of policy initiatives (Lipsky, 1980). Between these two positions are conceptions of restructuring that blend top-down and bottom-up approaches (Fullan, 1991; Mawhinney,1997).

Levin's (2001) inquiry into recent reform initiatives in five western countries points to three positive trends in policy-making that increase the odds of success. One trend reveals that governments are paying increasing attention to adaptation and implementation. Governments seem to be shifting their thinking from reform as mandates to reform as capacity-building. Parents and students are increasingly able to "share in shaping the way reforms actually work" (p. 193) Along the same line, governments are becoming more aware of the benefits of public debate and the inclusion of a variety of voices in the policy process. A third positive finding is an "increased interest in research and evidence as contributors to policy" (p. 192).

Levin's study offers six lessons for policy-makers

1. Goals for reform, at least in the short term, should be modest. Promises of great things in a short time are almost always going to lead to disappointment.
2. The design of reforms needs to take account of changing social context.
3. Goals should focus on those things that have a real chance to make a difference in outcomes for students.
4. To have any chance of lasting impact, reforms need to have careful and extensive processes to support effective use.
5. Reform should be seen as an opportunity for learning.
6. Research and evidence should play an important role in the reform process.

(2001, p. 194)

Policies to Encourage Quality Teaching

Literature on successful educational reform was reviewed in view of the fact that the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* policy is part of a wider slate of educational restructuring policy changes. For similar reasons it is useful to consult research into quality teaching. This section is based on a major international report published in 1994.

Quality in Teaching is an Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report developed by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. This extensive 1993 study drew conclusions from case studies involving eleven industrialized nations. Authors of the report espouse the position that teacher quality "should not be seen in terms of narrow behavioral competencies, but more in terms of dispositions. Teacher quality should be regarded as a holistic concept, that is, as a gestalt of qualities rather than a discrete set of measurable behaviors"(p. 14).

Conclusions from this eleven country research project are that quality is defined in terms of the "individuality, intelligence, artistry, grace and fluidity of individual teachers . . . This individual artistry, however, is nurtured by a strong schoolwide emphasis on teamwork, collaboration and risk-taking " (p. 87). Schools that exhibit high levels of teacher quality have over time modified their internal conditions to explicitly support quality in teaching. This is more than having a vision or altering the learning arrangements in a few classrooms. These schools have systematically, although at times intuitively, sought to bring their total organization in line with their philosophical commitment to student progress and quality learning (p. 99).

Another general finding is that government policy initiatives have difficulty in penetrating the school environment. "Many of the policies seem to be either politically or ideologically inspired, or ad hoc response to an immediate "crisis" situation. Simply changing bureaucratic procedures or holding people more accountable does not by itself improve the quality of education of our young people" (p. 88). Additional policy implications identified by the OECD suggest the need for consultative procedures in policy formulation as well as stipulating a preference for a broad and coherent range of comprehensive policies. The benefits of a centralized inspectorate, centralized support as well as a central teacher evaluation system are elaborated.

As in several of the studies referenced earlier in this paper, *Quality in Teaching* advocates policy processes that blend centralized and grassroots approaches to improving teaching.

> The advantage of coherent, centralised policy control is that it can create consistency from one school to another . . . Relying on central policy to sustain and improve teacher quality implies greater consistency of practice but a slower rate of change. In contrast, relying on individual teachers and schools allows continuous change and experimentation, but also permits some schools and teachers to lag far behind. Initiatives to improve teacher quality thus spring from the individual teachers, individual schools and external policies enacted by local, regional, or national education authorities.
>
> (p. 117).

Teacher education programming also figured prominently in the *Quality in Teaching* recommendations for improving teaching. The study reports a general trend in many countries for governments to take more control of teacher education to reflect an emerging policy consensus on the human capital benefits of maintaining focus on professional quality (p. 77). "In summary, over the past decade there has been a continuous programme of radical

education reform. At the heart of this have been policy makers' concerns with the perceived inadequacies and omissions in teacher education" (p. 79).

From this portrait of policies supportive of quality teaching, the review turns to activities undertaken by school leaders to achieve similar ends. The next section addresses literature in the related fields of teacher supervision and teacher evaluation.

Teacher Supervision and Evaluation

Traditionally, the literature on supervision and evaluation of teaching has treated supervision and evaluation separately, while acknowledging their overlapping nature in practice. The two concepts have a similar overlapping relationship in the Alberta's *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* policy. For these two reasons educational literature on first supervision and then evaluation is reviewed in this single section. It begins with a brief historical overview of the concept of supervision, with reference to its linking relationship with both teacher growth and teacher evaluation. Key concepts and practices associated with effective supervision are then enunciated in four areas: (1) purposes of supervision, (2) supervision and professional growth, (3) supervision and evaluation and (4) supervision and evaluation policy. Attention then more fully shifts to recent literature on teacher evaluation.

In the past decade a number of writers have examined historical aspects of supervision in their attempts to determine influences, meanings, purposes and functions. Three themes emerge from my reading of these reviews. One theme is the ongoing relationship between the educational supervision literature and writing in the organizational and management fields. Conceptions of supervision in education have paralleled prevalent ideas and images from managerial and organizational literature through much of the past century. The evolutionary trail from scientific management, through the human relations and democratic management eras into periods predominated by notions of supervision as change-agency and visionary leadership are included in almost all of the above noted sources and most specifically chronicled by Pajak (1993). A second theme is the recurring tension within the educational community between behavioral, technical conceptions of both teaching and supervising deriving from Thorndike on the one hand and progressive orientations following Dewey on the other (Darling-Hammond and Sclan, 1992; Bolin and Panaritis, 1992; Grimmett, Rolstad and Ford, 1992). A third theme that emerges is the continuing struggle to determine the breadth of the field. While there is wisdom in ensuring that we avoid what Bolin and Panaritis (1992) describe as an "illusion of consensus" which

> may have made it possible for scholars in supervision to work together to produce yearbooks and textbooks in the field. In agreeing to a definition of supervision that supposedly contained everyone's interests without sufficiently considering what this definition left out, supervisors mirrored and perhaps unconsciously facilitated a narrowing of the teacher's role and their own.
>
> (pp. 40-41)

Blase and Blase refer to a new consensus on the purposes of supervision. Citing the dramatic evidence presented by Glanz and Neville (1997), they indicate that

> Although the field of supervision is in a state of flux, most scholars agree that (1) schools should be learning environments for all students and educators, and (2) the facilitation of learning and growth should be the *number one responsibility* of an educational leader.
>
> (Blase and Blase, 1998, p.14)

Recent scholarship points to the fostering of professional growth through instructional leadership as the primary focus of supervision. An important distinction to make at this point is that supervision in this vein of educational literature is not the sole domain of the school principal. Consistently noted across the studies is the idea that supervision is a function not a position. Even works which eye the principalship as the key to school and professional growth (Blase and Blase, 1998; Glickman, 2002; Sergiovanni, 1992, for instance) see the principal's role framed as in the following often cited quotation:

> The principal of a successful school is not the instructional leader but the coordinator of teachers as instructional leaders.
>
> (Glickman, 1991, p.7)

Moreover, much of this literature emphasizing professional growth as the focus of supervision calls for re-conceptualizing schools as learning communities, a prevalent notion for the past fifteen years. Jo Blase captures this collegial, community view of supervision:

> Leadership is shared with teachers, and it is cast in coaching, reflection, collegial investigation, study teams, exploration into the uncertain, and problem solving. It is position-free supervision wherein the underlying spirit is one of expansion, not traditional supervision. Alternatives, not directives or criticism, are the focus, and the community of learners perform professional -- indeed, moral -- service to students
>
> (cited in Glickman, Gordon and Gordon, 2001)

The community conception of supervision sees the principal working with others in such important learning related areas as staff development, curriculum implementation and mentoring. To some scholars this work is better described by the rubric of instructional leadership rather than supervision. Increasingly the two terms -- instructional leadership and supervision -- are being used together. Witness the evolution of titles employed by Carl Glickman for his basic text: *Supervision of Instruction: A Developmental Approach* (1985, 1990, 1995) to *SuperVision and Instructional Leadership: A Developmental Approach* (2001). Similarly, his 2002 book for the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) on supervision is titled *Leadership for Learning: How to Help Teachers Succeed.* In their study *Handbook of Instructional Leadership: How Really Good Principals Promote Teaching and Learning,* Blase and Blase, 1998 reflect on the merits of continuing to use the term supervision. The following quotation from Glickman, Gordon and Gordon (2001) is representative of this discussion:

> To us, the lines between supervision and instructional leadership in successful schools are nonexistent. Successful school educators often do not use the term *supervision* in their work. Instead, words such as *collegiality, critical friends, moral leadership* and *leadership teams* hold sway.
>
> So what we have created is a new title--*SuperVision and Instructional Leadership*-- to more aptly capture the broader vision and reality of teaching and learning.
>
> (p. xiii)

What, then, are the distinctions between supervision and evaluation? In fact, supervision did have its early roots in inspection and evaluation (Wiles and Bondi, 1991; Bolin and Panaritis, 1992; Pajak, 1993; Glickman, Gordon and Gordon, 2001). For several scholars, evaluation is one of the functions of supervision. Glatthorn reflects this view: "One of the supervisory responsibilities that seems to grow increasingly important is evaluating teachers" (1990, p. 251). In their role-based conception of supervision, Wiles and Bondi (1991) portray "the supervisor in a constant evaluation position" (p. 23). They conclude:

> It appears that evaluating for effectiveness, for both teachers and programs, will not go away. There is no substitute for leadership in evaluation and the modern supervisor must be involved in the process of evaluation each step of the way.
>
> (p. 315).

While agreeing with those who see teacher evaluation as one aspect of supervision, Glickman, Gordon and Gordon (2001), advocate for the separation of evaluation into formative (improvement oriented) and summative (accountability oriented). They address a need to disconnect the former evaluation approach (which they see as an administrative function) from the latter (which they see as a supervisory function). Based on evidence presented in their text, they reason "summative and formative evaluation are both necessary but need to be separate. Formative evaluation is more likely to lead to the improvement of instruction" (p. 305).

Linkages between evaluation and supervision carry over into the policy realm. Linda Darling-Hammond working with Eileen Sclan studied the relationship between the professionalization of teaching and the changing policy environment in the 1990s. Their conception of supervision aligns with the instructional leadership and learning community approaches identified earlier in this section. They discern between two opposing views of teaching held by policy makers. In contrast to their professional construction of teaching is the bureaucratic conception of teaching. Whereas bureaucratic policy instruments dictate standardized and routinized practice, a professional orientation to policy starts from an assumption that:

> Because students learn in different ways and at different rates, teaching must be responsive to their needs if it is to be effective. As a consequence, teachers must make decisions in nonroutine situations using a complex knowledge base augmented by highly developed judgment and skill.
>
> (1992, p. 8)

Darling-Hammond and Sclan (1992) advocate policy initiatives that conceive of teaching as "informed judgment" rather than as "mastery of simple routines". Policies emphasizing the former take "a reflective teaching orientation stimulated by attention to teachers' individual contexts and felt needs" rather than emphasizing the "production of specific teacher behaviors thought to represent "effective teaching"(p. 15). Supervision and evaluation policies must not just view "teaching as complex and context-dependent", they must also construct images of supervisors and evaluators who are distinguished by their ability to exhibit professional modes of thinking and judgment (pp. 24-25).

This policy guidance offered by Darling-Hammond and Sclan is equally applicable in the field of teacher evaluation, to which our attention now more fully shifts. Trends in teacher evaluation reflect earlier noted tensions between technical-rational views of teaching and neo-progressive orientations, observe Danielson and McGreal (2000). Early evaluation systems relied on presage criteria or teacher traits to judge quality in teaching. Over the last thirty-five years emphasis shifted in response to 'scientifically based' teacher effectiveness research. Process criteria (the technical aspects of teaching) and clinical supervision "encouraged an emphasis on *teacher-centred, structured classrooms*" (p. 13). During the last fifteen to twenty years teacher evaluation has begun to focus on more complex outcomes. To account for this evolution in orientation, Danielson and McGreal state:

> Concerns over the U.S. economy, projected changes in the skills and knowledge students would need to be successful in a changing job market, and a backlash to the perceived narrowness of the teacher effects research -- all contributed to a noticeable shift in the study of teaching. The desired skills for students that emerged were critical thinking, problem-solving, collaborative learning and deeper understanding. These outcomes, in turn began to influence the language of teaching and what constitutes "good teaching". A shift from behaviorist to a view of learning derived from cognitive learning theory
>
> (p. 14)

Of the many purposes for teacher evaluation identified in the literature, two repeatedly standout: "Legislators and policymakers tend to value the summative purposes, those of quality assurance and accountability" (Danielson and McGreal, 2000, p. 8). "Educators, on the other hand, tend to think teacher evaluation should be designed for the purpose of professional development and the improvement of teaching. " (p. 9). These two scholars advance the claim that the two purposes should be merged. Attention to teacher growth in a well-designed teacher evaluation system can take care of the accountability purpose as well.

Danielson and McGreal (2000) conclude that 35 years of research on teacher evaluation consistently support two significant design considerations:

> First, teachers and administrators have always recognized the importance and necessity for evaluation, they have had serious misgivings, however, about how it was done and the lack of effect it had on teachers, their classrooms, and their students.

> Second, evaluation systems designed to support teacher growth and development through an emphasis on formative evaluation techniques produced higher levels of satisfaction and more thoughtful and reflective practice while still being able to satisfy accountability demands.
>
> (p. 15)

Three principal features of the integrated system conceptualized by Danielson and McGreal include (1) a differentiated approach, (2) a culture of professional inquiry and (3) carefully designed evaluation activities" (p. 28). Such systems are differentiated in that they include three distinct professional tracks according to individual needs: (1) the novice or probationary track, (2) a track for tenured educators, and (3) a track for those needing assistance. This part of the system aligns with Glatthorn's (1997) framework for differentiated supervision and is conceptually consistent with the varying supervisory repertoire in Glickman's developmental supervision (Glickman, 2002; Glickman, Gordon and Gordon, 2001). Another example of a differentiated system is outlined by Poole (1995). The second element of the Danielson and McGreal system has two key interrelated aspects: (1) a spirit of support and assistance for novices and (2) for tenured teaches a presumption of competence and need for continuing professional growth. They emphasize that "the presumption of competence is, by itself, insufficient; it must be accompanied by the presumption of continuous professional learning" (p. 29). As for the quality assurance piece, a "clear and coherent definition of exemplary practice based on research" (p. 22) is required.

Similar considerations were identified in a major 1993 Ministry funded review of teacher evaluation in Alberta. In their exhaustive study: *Toward Teacher Growth: A Study of the Impact of Alberta's Teacher Evaluation Policy* a multi-university research team led by Haughey, Townsend, O'Reilly and Ratsoy identified elements of teacher evaluation practices that were successfully encouraging professional growth in several jurisdictions in the province at the time. In these instances policies and procedures conceived of teaching as the contextual exercise of professional judgement. Teachers were assumed to be competent and there were separate procedures for those whose practice was found lacking (p 300).

Stronge (1997) reports that teacher evaluation is most effective when conducted in an environment of mutual trust. Further, he notes that "A conceptually sound and technically correct teacher evaluation system will not guarantee effective evaluation, but one that is technically flawed and irrational most assuredly will guarantee failure. In his estimation technically sound evaluation systems are designed to adhere to four basic standards:

- Propriety (i.e., they are legally and ethically acceptable)
- Utility (i.e., they are useful, informative, timely, and influential)
- Feasibility (i.e., they are efficient, viable in the context of the organization, and relatively easy to use)
- Accuracy (i.e., they are valid and reliable)

(p. 10)

Images of Practice

Several of the studies consulted to this point have made reference to such ideas as images of practice, conceptions of teaching and constructions of supervision. A growing number of theorists in the educational and organizational fields are utilizing such notions as heuristic devices to assist with analysis and interpretation. Representative selections from this body of literature are now considered.

Several theorists have found it instructive to reflect on images used to convey meaning in organizational and professional settings. Those who work from this metaphor-based perspective value such reflection as one means of revealing underlying assumptions. Various terms are employed. To Senge (1990) these are *mental models*, to Sergiovanni (1991) they are *mindscapes* and to Caine and Caine (1997) they are *perceptual orientations*. Ratsoy (1997) comments on this interpretative trend:

> Recently, frames, images and metaphors, these terms, often used interchangeably with theoretical perspectives, have become fashionable initiatives for describing and understanding the functioning of schools and other such organizations, and for predicting the behavior of individuals in these organizations
>
> (p. 2)

Morgan's (1997) points out the advantages of a multi-metaphor approach:

> The insights of one metaphor can often help us overcome the limitations of another. . . . Metaphors lead to new metaphors creating a mosaic of competing and complementary insights. This is one of the most powerful qualities of the approach. . . . Metaphor can be mobilized at a practical level to create more effective ways of understanding and tackling organizational problems.
>
> (cited in Ratsoy, p. 3)

In their 1993 study of the principalship Lynn Beck and Joseph Murphy conclude that "examining themes implicit in metaphors used historically to discuss the principalship has proven to be a useful method in our quest for a deeper understanding of this important role" (p. 196). They, too, look to Morgan for guidance in how to use metaphors for analytic purposes. Morgan envisions engagement in two phases: "the processes of *diagnostic reading* and *critical evaluation*" (cited in Beck and Murphy, 1993, p. 196 emphasis in original).

Ratsoy (1999) explains the use of metaphors as a conceptual framework in a review of an extensive source of data on teacher evaluation. He and a team of research colleagues "sought comprehensiveness yet parsimony in choosing a conceptual framework" that encompassed three metaphors of teaching commonly found in the literature (p. 3). The three metaphors were used as design guides to structure the initial research. Following a four-year reflection on the data his team found that an additional seven images were needed "to bring meaning to certain aspects of the study and that together provide a depth of understanding not possible with the original three-dimensional framework" (p. 3). The images that will be used in the conclusion

of this paper to reflect on aspects of the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* policy will based on the basic frameworks which follow in two areas: (1) teaching and (2) supervision and evaluation,.

In their analysis of teacher professionalism Linda Darling-Hammond and A. Lin Goodwin (1993, p. 230) conceive of teacher work in five typologies. Similar categories of teaching images were developed ten years earlier by Darling-Hammond, Wise and Pease (1983). Each of these five images suggests a specific approach to teaching. At a very basic level they venture the image of *the teacher as laborer.* Teaching in this conception is "preplanned, highly structured and routinized, and closely supervised. Tasks are assigned by those not directly engaged in the work (1993, p.23). The teacher implements the "program in the prescribed manner and adheres to specified routines and procedures (1983, p. 391). At slightly more sophisticated level is the *teacher as technician.* In this metaphor learning is predictable and depends on strategies predetermined by the administration and passed on for implementation by teachers. Conception is separated from execution thereby placing the teacher in the role of a technician. This technical-rational orientation has been noted earlier in the review as an outcome of the teacher effectiveness research that gained prominence in 1970s and 1980s.

Teaching is understood as a more complex and ambiguous undertaking in the next two images. *Teaching as craft* envisions teachers who exhibit specialized knowledge, with decision-making based on the application of standardized modes of practice. "Tricks of the trade" are emphasized over theory and reflection. Reliance is placed "on formulas for action over contingent uses of knowledge . . . a set of basic techniques, usually derived from correlational studies, as the basis of routine practice (1993, p. 24). Personal creativity, adaptability and novelty of practice are emphasized in the *teacher as artist* conception. "Greatness as a teacher is often characterized by immeasurable qualities that extend beyond content knowledge or specific technique – intuition, personality or individual dynamism, a six sense that 'reads' students' needs (1993, p. 24).

At the highest level is *teaching as a profession.* Darling-Hammond and her colleagues distinguish between craft and profession in that the professional exercises judgement based on theoretical knowledge as to the best application of the techniques at his or her disposal in a particular context. Evaluation of competence "at professional problem-solving is based on standards developed by peers" (1983, p. 391). "The deliberative teacher engages in self-reflection and analysis, makes carefully considered choices about instruction based on the needs of students, and assumes responsibility for the curriculum" (1993, p. 25). The main points of distinction from craft workers are that

> Professionals not only know whether and when to choose particular courses of action according to general principles, but they can also evaluate multifaceted situations in which many variables intersect. Practice is monitored by peers according to standards of the profession; and the standards reflect the interactive, complex nature of the work (1993, p. 25).

These five conceptions of teaching are not viewed as mutually exclusive. Darling-Hammond and Goodwin (1993) note "teaching encompasses elements of each" (p. 25). Earlier in my

review reference was made to images of teaching as "informed judgment" rather than as "mastery of simple routines" (Darling-Hammond and Sclan, 1992, p.15). This "informed judgement" conception fits within the fifth category, *teaching as profession*.

Educational literature on supervision provides a similar hierarchy of images. Thomas Sergiovanni (1992) suggests that supervisory policy and practice can be based on five broad sources of authority, each suggesting an image of practice. At one end of this continuum is supervision based on *bureaucratic* authority – in the form of mandates, rules, regulations, job descriptions, and expectations. When supervisory practices are based on bureaucratic authority, teachers are expected to follow guidelines and respond appropriately or face the consequences. *Psychological* authority in supervision is based on charismatic leadership, motivational technology, and human relations skills. Teachers are expected to respond to personality and the pleasant environment provided, behaving appropriately for the rewards made available in exchange by the psychologically based supervisor. The *technical-rational* image of supervision is characterized by the application of logic and scientific research. In supervision based on the authority of technical rationality, teachers are expected to respond in light of what is considered to be truth.

Professional images of supervision in Sergiovanni's framework involve informed and seasoned craft knowledge and personal expertness. Supervisory practice based on professional authority expects teachers to respond to common socialization, accepted tenets of practice, and internalized expertness. The highest authority upon which supervision can be based in this scheme is m*oral authority,* in the form of obligations and duties derived from widely shared values, ideas and ideals. Teachers are expected to respond to shared commitments and interdependence within the image of moral supervision (pp. 204 –205).

In the supervisory realm one additional image is provided to complete the analytical framework. The metaphor of the *supervisor as teacher* is suggested by a number of influential sources. It is quite comprehensively and persuasively presented as a desired image by Edward Pajack (1993) who applies Senge's (1990) conception of the *leader as teacher* to supervisory work in schools. This image fits well with both Glickman's (1991) thoughts on *the principal as leader of teacher leaders* and Barth's (1990) conception of a *community of leaders.*

Having addressed a number of conceptual issues relevant to a fuller understanding of the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* policy, discussion now shifts to the situation in Alberta itself. Before moving to an examination of the more specific policy processes at work, background on the provincial setting in which the policy developed is provided. Actual reforms that comprised the restructuring program in this Canadian province are then summarized.

ALBERTA -- CONTEXT AND EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

Under the constitution of Canada the responsibility for education is assigned to provincial governments. Each provincial ministry of education establishes curriculum, provides funding and enacts a legislative framework to guide school authorities. While all ten provinces share these and several other basic features of educational provision, many aspects of the educational

system are unique to each province. To more fully understand the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* policy and the processes that generated it, it is helpful to illuminate some of the key elements of the Alberta educational context and to briefly review the reform program undertaken by the government immediately following the election of Premier Ralph Klein in the spring of 1993.

Alberta is located on the immediate eastern side of the Rocky Mountains and bounds Montana and North Dakota on its southern extreme. With a population of three million, it is the fourth largest of the Canadian provinces. Though nearly two-thirds of the populace lives in or around the cities of Calgary and Edmonton, its remaining citizens are quite widely distributed across the province. Politically, Alberta has a longstanding conservative tradition. As Conway (1984) and the Palmers (1990) see it, Alberta's brief history is characterized by several recurring themes. Its potential has been constrained by several forces: rapidly and dramatically changing economic circumstances; political and economic domination by central Canadian interests; and reliance upon cyclical resource-based economics. At the same time, Alberta's responses to what Conway calls the "politics of desperation" are generally seen to be politically creative and economically strident, leading to a brash and adventuresome spirit in its politics and economics. Additional historic trends include a tendency toward single-party governance and leadership by strong premiers who have been long serving, widely supported and prone to authoritarian decision-making. At the present time Alberta's is a low tax, market-oriented economy characterized by steady growth over most of the last decade. Politically, the present regime has adopted many attributes of what is often described as a neoliberal agenda (Stewart, 1995). This represents a sharper turn to the political right after nearly fifty years of conservatism that pragmatically governed from the center and was quite consistently inclined to social and economic interventionism. (Smith, 2000).

On the educational side, the provincial ministry has historically been a very active liberal leader in both national and provincial educational arenas. Alberta's 525,000 students are served in 1,800 schools. Private schools receive approximately one-half of the public school grant and enroll 4% of the student population. Presently there are 60 school boards governed by locally elected trustees. Funding is almost exclusively supplied by the province, but collective bargaining occurs at the school district level. All teachers are required to belong to the Alberta Teachers' Association, which serves both teacher welfare and professional development functions. Curriculum-based provincial examinations are administered in core subject areas to all students in grades three, six, nine and twelve.

Under the government reform agenda of the newly elected premier, the Alberta educational landscape was altered dramatically through the mid-nineties. In what many observers characterize as an unprecedented wave of top-down, rapidly implemented educational restructuring "the explicit goal was to increase the accountability of public education, both fiscally and academically" (Webber and Townsend, 1998, p. 174). Several scholars (Barlow and Robertson, 1994; Kuchapski, 1998; Manzer, 1994; and Townsend, 1998) conclude that the heavy-handed reform agenda was tied to at least three, often less explicit, additional purposes. First, (and most explicit) was the concentrated effort to eliminate the provincial deficit. Second, was the re-establishment of provincial control through the consolidation of school jurisdictions and the re-institution of provincially appointed superintendents. Third, was

the swift transition to a market ideology in many aspects of the system. Add to these challenges across-the-board salary reductions of 5%, an overall funding grant decrease of 12.4% over three years and a 20% decline in kindergarten funding. The reform package also included the mandated implementation of School Based Decision-Making, the establishment of School Councils and extended opportunities for parental choice. The number of school districts was reduced from 141 to 60. School districts were required to develop three-year business plans aligned with the province's plans. The annual publication of results was mandated for schools and districts. Legislation to implement this overall reform program was introduced in February and passed in May of 1994.

School system leaders and principals were under considerable pressure during this intense period of change (Yanitski & Pysyk, 1999; Aitken & Townsend, 1998; Townsend, 1998). With multiple policy changes to engage with, it was possible to have overlooked or to have undervalued a more positive element of the reform program. Alterations to the provincial teacher education, certification and evaluation policy as well as the institution of the *Teaching Quality Standard* have the potential to significantly impact teacher and supervisor professionalism. In contrast to many of the other reforms, changes in these areas were based on research and evolved through ongoing input and multi-stakeholder collaboration. The 1996 policy position paper *An Integrated Framework to Enhance the Quality of Teaching in Alberta* led to five comprehensive and coordinated reforms. (1) Initial and permanent teacher certification in the province is now based on achievement of research-based descriptions of knowledge, skills and attributes (KSAs). (2) Teachers are responsible for their own professional growth through the annual generation of *Professional Growth Plans* based upon their own diagnoses of their learning needs. (3) The principal's responsibility for supervision (and instructional leadership) is placed for the first time in provincial policy. (4) Formal evaluation can now only occur in three circumstances: (a) for teachers new to the profession or new to teaching in the province; (b) when requested by a tenured teacher and (c) when the results of supervision warrant it. In all other situations leadership to enhance quality in the classroom resides with teaching professionals. In schools with strong professional cultures, opportunities abound for teachers to work independently or cooperatively toward this end.

With this background information in place, analysis now moves to the first two stages of the reform process as it unfolded in the Canadian province of Alberta. The origins and the adoption of the general reforms noted above and then the more specific changes encompassed in *An Integrated Framework to enhance the Quality of Teaching in Alberta* are discussed.

ORIGINS

Structure for the next two sections of this paper is provided by Levin's (2001) four-stage framework of the policy process. In this section the origins of the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* policy are discussed within the context of educational reform in Alberta. The policy's evolution through the adoption phase follows. It is important to keep in mind that such divisions of policy-making into stages involve somewhat arbitrary categorization to assist with analysis and to help build understanding of an ambiguous and complex social reality. Processes are often discontinuous, overlapping and interactive. The organization of events into a framework such as Levin's does, however, create a useful

interpretive structure within which disciplined inquiry can lead to a more comprehensive understanding (Mawhinney, 1995).

When studying policy origins "emphasis is on individual actors, streams of influence and political processes, as well as underlying ideas" (Levin, 2001, p. 114). Understanding the ideas and influences at play and identifying key political actors can be a complex analytic challenge. Within departments of education, ministers and bureaucrats tend to view policy from different perspectives. As Levin (2001) observes:

> Politicians are necessarily concerned about the broad political agenda, about the hot issues of the moment, and about how policies will be perceived. Their time horizons tend to be short. Civil servants, on the other hand, are usually interested in the long-term welfare of their policy area.
>
> (p. 70)

As the education policy field has increased in importance, two external influences have risen in prominence. Other government departments (Treasury, for instance) have increased their influence, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s when deficit reduction and cost control became central concerns of governments everywhere. Business interests have also come to play a more important role as education has become more and more tightly connected to government's economic agenda (Levin, 2001, p. 71).

How policy problems are framed will have a significant bearing upon the range of solutions that are considered.

> Polices rarely tackle single problems; rather, they face clusters of entangled problems that may have contradictory solutions. Many problems are complex because of their size and breadth; they comprise sets of other, perhaps smaller problems whose very interconnectedness makes them difficult to comprehend, and whose boundaries are difficult to define across issues and over time
>
> (Desveaux, Lindquist, & Toner 1994, p. 497)

Ideas about what should be done about particular policy problems stem from many sources according to Levin. Policy entrepreneurs, policy advocates and policy intellectuals active within a policy sub-system contribute policy proposals for policy actors to consider. "At any given moment there tends to be a conventional wisdom about what is true in any policy area. Donald Schon refers to these as 'ideas in good currency'" (1971, cited in Levin, 2001, p. 77).

"Many analysts of education seem to give primacy to ideology over politics, arguing that programs are shaped by core beliefs much more than political vicissitudes" (Levin, 2001, p. 73). Within the community of Canadian educational policy writers examples of those who approach the field from this perspective include Taylor (2000), Manzer (1994), Barlow and Robertson (1994) and Kachur (1999). From a different perspective, Levin (2001), Smith (2001), Mazurek (1999), Pal (1997), Mawhinney (1995) and Howlett and Ramish (1995) give ideology less emphasis in their analyses. They focus more on situational pragmatics and the intricacies of politics in action.

In defining ideology as "a framework for thinking about social and political maters . . . used to explain, figure out, make sense of or give meaning to the social and political world" (p. 78-79), Levin (relying on Apple, 1990) adds the following guiding comments with respect to the term:

> Recent education reforms have often been criticized -- and defended -- as representing a particular intellectual perspective. Confusingly, this perspective may be referred to by both supporters and critics as either neo-conservative or neo-liberal, both of which appear to be encompassed in the more general term "New Right".
>
> (p. 78)

> Manzer's analysis (of the ideological analytical stance) leads on to distinguish between ideology as a public justification or rationale for reform, and ideology as an actual constituting element of reform, whether so stated in public or not. Any combination of these possibilities could exist -- that is, reforms could be ideological in their justification, in their actual constitution, in both respects, or in neither.
>
> (p. 81)

> Influential work in organization theory (Argyris and Schon, 1978) suggest that there are important gaps between what people say they believe and how they actually behave, and that people may in fact be incapable of acting in accord with their espoused values. The same may be true at times of ideological positions.
>
> (p. 81)

In his 1994 book *Canadian Public Schools and Political Ideas: Canadian Educational Policy in Historical Perspective* Ron Manzer asserts that "liberalism has been the hegemonic ideology in Canadian educational politics and policy (p. 12). Recently, a new form of liberalism has emerged -- technological liberalism. Manzer advances it as a distinct and ascendant public policy perspective linked to the emergence of the new global economy. It is based upon the belief that

> The new global economy is ruthlessly competitive, not just among individuals and firms but also among nations. Material well being, political freedom, and cultural development are already strongly determined by, and in future will be overwhelmingly dependent on, superior capacity for scientific creativity, technological innovation, and economic productivity (p. 267).

Manzer's views are reflective of a wider body of opinion that sees the shift away from the policies of the welfare state in the 1980s as a response to the significant economic challenges encountered by industrialized countries in the mid-1970s (Reich, 1992; Stewart, 1998; Heilbroner, 1992; Drucker, 1993 and McBride & Sheilds, 1997). For Pal (1997) globalization is an irreversible aspect of current reality with which all policy actors must now contend: "The central issue today is the relationship between governments, markets, and civil society" (p. 55).

Janice Gross Stein provides final words in this discussion of the deep-rooted changes to the political context:

> More and more, national economies are being integrated into a single global marketplace through trade, finance, production, and a dense web of international treaties and institutions. . . . Leaders of these newly powerful international institutions have enshrined market liberalism as official doctrine . .
>
> (p. 49)

> The new smarter state . . . . is becoming the buyer of public goods on our behalf, rather than the direct provider, as it was during the industrial age. . . . as it backs out of the delivery of public goods, devolves authority down, and contracts out service delivery. . . . and steering rather than rowing . . .
>
> (p. 146)

Discussion now shifts to the Alberta scene. After commentary on foundational aspects of the overall package of government reforms, origins of the changes in teacher education, certification, profession growth and evaluation are tracked.

A Government Re-invented

Within the context of an across-the-board "reinvention of government" by the Progressive Conservative government under Premier Ralph Klein, *Meeting the Challenge: Three-Year Business Plan* (1994) laid out Alberta's nine-goal plan for restructuring education. Webber and Townsend (1998) describe these as the most profound changes in the history of public education in the province (p. 173). Barlow and Robertson (1994) view the Alberta reform policy agenda as "the most comprehensive changes ever introduced by a provincial education system (p. 219).

From a political-empirical analytic position Bruce, Kneebone, and McKenzie (1997) itemize the conditions that created a window of opportunity for provincial policy-makers:

> the forces that came together in Alberta to permit fundamental change included (1) the perception of fiscal crisis; (2) the presence of a relatively centralized, hierarchical political system able to move quickly; (3) strong and determined leadership; (4) the basic elements of reform prepared in advance; (5) an electorate that is receptive to change; and (6) an opposition that is fragmented
>
> (p. 201)

Maude Barlow and Heather-Jane Robertson (1994) characterized the government's intentions from a more ideologically based position:

> The basis of these reforms is neither pedagogical nor fiscal, but ideological and political, consistent with the ultraconservative beliefs about the role of

> government (as small as possible), the role of the private sector (as large as possible) and a deregulated marketplace.
>
> (p. 219)

From a similarly ideologically-centred perspective, Alison Taylor's (2001) assessment is that the reform program contained some elements that were "neoconservative in their emphasis on traditional values and neoliberal in their emphasis on a revised human capital theory that draws simultaneously on the discourses of education for economic prosperity and the fiscal crisis of the state" (p. 95). Taylor traces the ideological roots of three major discourses tied to the "crisis in public education -- the fiscal crisis of state, the unhappy parent and the dissatisfied employer -- and explains each in the context of associated values and ideas that were forming in several other parts of the western industrial world at the time. Moreover, the three discourses are presented as complementary components of an emerging hegemony.

From either a political-empirical or an ideological stance, two major government-led consultation processes helped to forge the consensus from which the Alberta restructuring initiative was launched. Like other analysts (Lisac, 1995; Taft, 1997; and Smith, 2001), Taylor relates the importance of the 1991 *Toward 2000 Together* consultation process to Klein's eventual electoral success in 1993. Further connections can be drawn to the federal government's 1993 *Prosperity Initiative.* These two governmental ventures pointed the ideological way toward an economically competitive future in Taylor's assessment:

> Consultations and reports orchestrated by governments legitimized the hegemonic work of such groups by producing 'truths' based on the discourses of educational and fiscal crisis and neoliberal solutions. The effect was the shifting role of government from regulation and redistribution towards developing the conditions for capital accumulation.
>
> (p. 70)

In contrast to these ideological perspectives on the Alberta reforms, Levin and other observers (Smith, 2000; Bruce, Kneebone, and McKenzie,1997; Lisac, 1995; Wagner, 1998) attribute the origins of the package to more practical and political considerations. Taylor's insight that a portion of the restructuring program can be understood as opportunism on the part of certain high ranking bureaucrats to achieve their own specific policy agenda is shared by Levin. He suggests: "The Alberta reforms need to be seen in the context of a very powerful Department of Education that had always played a lead role in education policy" (p. 106). Levin attributes government's motives to more pragmatic elements. He understands the reforms to be "shaped more by government's desire to reduce spending than by any other consideration" (p. 105). His analysis somewhat overlaps with Taylor's in that his reading of the documentary record indicates the "government justified the reforms in terms of efficiency, with a strong orientation towards preparing students to meet the needs of the economy" (p. 106).

At least three individual political actors are understood to have had significant impact on the origin of these educational reforms. Premier Klein's commitment to spending reduction was vital. Minister Jonson, as a former school principal and a former president of the Alberta Teachers' Association, became interested in and strongly advocated for such elements of the

program as charter schools and school-based decision-making (Levin, 2001). The strength, vision and action orientation of Deputy Minister Bosetti were very important factors in the achievement of the long contemplated goals of reducing the number of school boards and implementing more equitable provincial funding (Wagner, 1998). Bosetti provided the following assessment of Alberta's challenge in a May 1994 address to Canadian policy makers:

> A complex set of global, national and provincial socio-economic trends are dramatically affecting what we teach in our schools, how we can best finance education, how we can most effectively and efficiently govern education, and how we can best deliver education to our students. The Alberta government has worked hard to address these issues, to engage in public consultations over several years and to provide leadership in ensuring the education system is well placed to prepare our students for the present and future challenges they will face.
>
> As hard as we've worked to implement change to the Alberta basic education system, we know our work has really just begun.
>
> (p. 17)

Teacher Education in Alberta: A Model for the Future

Bosetti was also a prominent actor in the more specific changes that were packaged together in the policy position paper *An Integrated Framework to Enhance the Quality of Teaching in Alberta* in 1996. Minister Jonson, a small cohort of leading ministry officials and representatives of major stakeholder groups were also actively involved in the process. Many of the ideas expressed in this policy document, however, have a much longer life span. Work to move these ideas onto the policy agenda actually began more than a decade earlier. Zatko (1980) indicates: "A major educational reform effort in Alberta started in the early 1980s. Reform was stimulated by the arrival of a new Deputy Minister of Education and a series of changes to the political, economic and social climate of the province (p. 1). Under the leadership of this new Deputy Minister (Bosetti) and then Minister David King a policy paper titled *The Education of Teachers in Alberta: A Model For the Future* sought to "take a significant step forward in enhancing both the professional qualifications and the performance of teachers." (Alberta Education, 1984, p. 1). Several of the paper's recommendations were later integrated into the 1996 plan. It is interesting to note how similar the ten descriptors of effective teaching itemized in *A Model For the Future* are to the eleven descriptors of quality teaching illuminated in the more recent document.

The early-1980s educational reforms to which Zatko alluded occurred within a new design which converted "the Department's approach to the management of the provincial system from a regulations-based to a policy-based" approach operationalized in the 1983 Management Finance Plan (MFP) (Bohac, 1989, p. 1). The MFP shifted responsibility from "regulatory, pre-audit provincial control of educational inputs, to a system of shared responsibility in the planning, budgeting, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of educational outputs and results" leading to "greater accountability at all levels, focusing on the quality of results achieved by the education system" (Duke, 1985, p. 7). The MFP re-implemented annual curriculum-based,

standardized tests for all grade three, six, nine and twelve students. Evaluation was the cornerstone of this system, which required every school authority to establish student evaluation policies and to enact cyclical teacher, program, school and school-system evaluation programs. In my estimation the MFP was a two-pronged attempt to better manage the policy interdependent educational environment that was emerging in Alberta. On the one hand its revised funding approaches strived to achieve greater equity as well as clearer accountability relationships with boards. On the other hand it represented a renewed effort to achieve policy tutelage (Manzer, 1994) through adherence to the *Program Policy Manual.* Within this policy conception, school systems were required to develop and implement policies consistent with and derived from provincial policies in several areas, including Teacher Evaluation.

Within the context of the broader government restructuring initiative and other more controversial educational changes, an opportunity was presented to bring ongoing teacher education and evaluation reform work started ten years earlier to conclusion through Goal Four: To Improve Teaching" in the Ministry's *Meeting the Challenge: Three-Year Business Plan for Education* (1994). The 1994 plan incorporated developmental activities begun earlier by the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards (COATS) and its Teacher Education Task Force. This work was based on a mandate established in Minister Jim Dinning's *Vision for the Nineties . . . A Plan of Action* (1991) "to revise teacher certification requirements to ensure that they reflect the most current knowledge about effective teaching practices'" (Alberta Education, 1991, p. 4). In the origin phase, as outlined in *Meeting the Challenge,* the intent was to focus on two activities (1) updating teacher preparation and certification requirements and (2) establishing competencies for beginning and experienced teachers. Two results were stipulated in the plan: (1) "Teachers have the skills and knowledge required to help students learn" and "Teachers have the authority to make instructional decisions in the classroom."

Origins of the 1994 proposals that would within two years become key components of the *An Integrated Framework to Enhance the Quality of Teaching in Alberta* and within four years be enacted in the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* policy have been outlined. Of interest in contrast to several other education reform proposals are two key features. First, the proposals going forward in this area show a clear and ongoing link to educational research. Second, the proposals arise out of (what interviewed participants describe to be) open, and continuous collaborative processes among key provincial educational stakeholders. The evolution of these proposals is given further treatment in the forthcoming section on policy adoption.

ADOPTION

What happens between an initial proposal and its final approval is the focus of the second of Levin's stages - *adoption.* Comparatively less has been written and theorized about this stage. Yet it is in this dimension that some of the more interesting changes to longer standing political processes are revealed. Whereas discussion and consensus building characterized past political processes in the educational realm, top-down strategies, rapid implementation and conflict have characterized recent reforms. Proposals do, however, still get altered through the internal and external debates associated with this stage and as a result of consultation processes. Following a general discussion of political processes evident in this portion of Levin's

framework, adoption of the general Alberta reform program is addressed. Significant alterations to key ideas in the discussion paper *Quality of Teaching: Quality Education for Alberta Students* revealing a more open, policy-learning approach to the teaching quality reforms are then presented.

What begins as a slogan or a concept in the origins stage "must be turned into a detailed scheme in the form of legislation, regulations or policy guidelines (Levin, 2001, p. 116). Politically, individual reforms can mean different things to individual politicians and as a consequence can contain several inconsistencies. The parliamentary tradition of an independent, long serving bureaucracy leads to considerable "bureaucratic accommodation" in Levin's view. Details and wording worked out by civil servants can alter policy intentions through the adoption process.

Noting that the politics of education have become more confrontational, Levin observes that opposition to policy proposals generally stems from two main sources. First are opposition political parties. Second are organized groups within the policy field. The influence that teachers' organizations have had on reform proposals has diminished in comparison to the weight given to other voices -- business interests and parental groups for instance (Levin, 2001; Taylor, 2001; and Wagner, 1998). Teachers have had difficulty in positioning themselves "in the public eye so as to avoid falling into the characterization of teachers by governments as being entirely self-interested" (Levin, 2001, p. 120). Reconciling the often divergent views within the membership has proven another taxing challenge for professional organizations.

Views vary on the value and purpose of consultation processes invariably featured in the adoption stage. Are governments really interested in learning more about the issue by hearing what others have to say? Are consultation mechanisms merely a means to sell ideas and to impress the public? Answers to these often asked questions are further complicated when sophisticated government communication strategies are taken into account. Levin (2001) describes the successes that governments' have had in "framing" political debates by "promoting their ideas and proposals in a way that is most sympathetic to broadly held public views" and by employing forms of argument (discourses) that appear to make their positions self-evident. Debate is now more acrimonious and often reflects more sophisticated management of discourse by all parties (p. 123).

More hopeful views of the usefulness of stakeholder consultation processes are provided by Pal (1997) and by Lindblom (1990, cited in Levin, 2001). An increased need for consulting and partnering with members of the policy community is a reflection of a markedly altered environment in Pal's estimation. He writes

> Consultations can be seen as empty theatrics where interest groups rant predictably while decision-makers watch the clock, waiting for it all to be over so that they can go and make the decisions they were going to make anyway. Partnerships can be viewed as an attempt to get out of key areas of government responsibility by shifting delivery (but not adequate financial or logistic support) over to the private/nonprofit sector.
>
> (p. 217).

Pal describes a new reality for governments: "With consultations, the challenge is balancing public demands with the realities of hard decisions. With partnerships, the challenge is balancing accountability with autonomy (p. 217). His perspective is summarized by the following comments:

> modern policy-making cannot be directed by government, supplemented by representations from the public or interest groups. That model died years ago, as analysts and practitioners realized the importance of new social movements, public interest groups, more complex associational systems, and the strategic value of information. . . . networks are, if anything, more important now than before, even as their fundamental characteristics have changed in light of globalization and other forces. Government has less money, and a more sober assessment of its own capacities. It cannot monopolize information anymore, and in many policy areas, is heavily dependent on the specialized expertise of its partners.
>
> (p. 225)

Like Pal, Lindblom values public debate and consultation as opportunities for pragmatic and responsive problem solving and social learning. "There would seem to be more hope for good policy in the contestation of partisan participants, each aided by social science, than in policy making by an inevitably partisan single decision maker falsely perceived or postulated as above partisanship" (1990, cited in Levin, 2001, p. 125).

Education in Alberta -- Change and Continuity

Many of the Alberta reform initiatives are consistent with the strong statist and interventionist trends evident in Alberta Education activities over a longer period of time (Levin, 2001; Wagner, 1998; Mazurek, 1999). "The 1994 reforms were really a logical continuation of a process that had started much earlier and that was substantially driven by the department as much as by the politicians." Of similar importance: "School districts and school administrators were used to receiving and implementing directions from the province, leading to less opposition on many issues (Levin, 2001, p. 129). Kas Mazurek (1999) also notes:

> . . . those who consider the major changes that education underwent in 1993-96 something "imposed out of the blue" merely on the whims of a particular government under a particular leadership are sadly mistaken. It is well worth emphasizing that the current state of schooling in Alberta is not simply the consequence of a political agenda initiated by the administration of Premier Klein. As we have seen, the process which culminated in the dramatic restructuring of schooling in the 1993-96 period can be traced back at least two decades to the early 1970s.
>
> (p.17)

Further insight into the relative calm that characterized the adoption phase can be attributed to a legacy of "plebiscitary democracy." According to Smith (2000), this means that "for decades

Albertans have never adhered to a strong, vibrant, active notion of citizenship in which they participated in the making of public policy" (p. 299).

That opposition focussed on specific elements of the reforms rather than on "a grand critique", is not surprising to Levin, "since the reforms themselves did not have a grand narrative to be critiqued" (p. 130). Opposition politicians saw the changes as a power grab. Debate on notions of choice and charter schooling, for instance, was almost absent, in Levin's reading of the public record. While the Alberta Teachers' Association did organize its own consultation processes to counter those organized by the government, on the whole, this opposition was not terribly effective in view of "the ATA's inability to present itself to the government and the public at large as having an important role in public policy formulation, rather than merely a trade union bargaining for higher wages" (Mazurek, 1999, p. 18).

Taylor (2001) evaluates the situation from a slightly different perspective. The ATA's reluctance to enter into a larger anti-government coalition with other labour groups is explained in terms of the historic ability of the ATA to influence policy through its role as a professional association as opposed to a labour union. Despite "attempts to promote an 'ideology of professionalism,' however, the government constructed its relationship with the ATA as one of *employer* and *union*" (p. 181). ATA attempts to promote the view of "education as a societal institution that should open up opportunities for all students, as opposed to a tool of economic elites and middle-class parents" (p. 200) initially made little headway. It was not until 1995 that the association's efforts coalesced into the Public Education Works program based on the strategy of convincing the public to advocate for alternative educational policy positions.

Just as many observers question the openness of the consultation processes that preceded the Alberta's 1994 restructuring plans, similar doubts are cast on the government's receptivity to alternative views through the public consultations in the adoption phase. Five teams of legislators (MLAs) were formed by Minister Jonson to give the public opportunity to provide input on the implementation of the reforms. This involvement of backbench politicians in what had previously been exercises carried out by members of the civil service marks a significant shift in governmental processes. As Smith (2001) observes such involvement reflects Klein's political astuteness:

> Very much aware that he had been propelled to leadership by the support of the part's rural backbenchers, consolidated their support and symbolically acknowledged the desire for broader input into decision-making by introducing a new legislative committee system in which the government party backbench was more involved in government decision-making.
>
> (p. 294)

Adoption processes were open enough to yield some significant changes to Alberta's proposed educational reforms. Five important examples are listed. (1) Provision for some local taxation was restored. (2) Appointment of superintendents became a responsibility shared between school boards and the province. (3) School councils evolved into advisory bodies rather than assuming responsibilities for governance. (4) The provincial school improvement initiative

changed to a capacity-building model (the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement -- AISI) from its original incarnation as a payment for results approach (the School Performance Incentive Program -- SPIP). (5) The removal of proposals for the periodic re-certification of teachers.

Toward Teacher Growth -- Endogenous Policy Learning

Those who believe that policy initiatives should take into account the views of stakeholders in the policy subsystem, reflect research findings and be constructed from collaborative problem solving can take heart from the description of the adoption phase of the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* below. Based on interviews with significant participants in the policy development process, a review of internal Ministry documents and consideration of the small number of secondary sources on the topic, it is evident that changes in this policy area should be characterized in these ways. In my estimation, the adoption process reflects what Howlett and Ramish (1995) refer to as endogenous policy learning or what Rose (1993) calls lesson-drawing.

Key actors in the adoption phase from May 1994 through late 1996 are essentially those noted in the origin phase. Through the adoption phase, however, others in the policy community became more intensely involved in consultation processes. Additionally, the stakes became higher for both members of the post-secondary and K-12 educational communities, because of the tight timeline and the clear message that this time government was prepared to see the proposals all the way to completion. Key personnel changes within the Ministry as well as in the leadership of the ATA and the ASBA did not seem to negatively impact the momentum that the initiative received through its inclusion in the 1994 government plan and the stated expectation that the work was to be completed by the end of 1995.

It is possible to trace adoption phase changes through a review of several key Alberta Education documents from the period. From the very beginning, the Ministry's *Teacher Education Policy Reform: Overview and Workplan* intended to work "in consultation with its education partners" to ensure that Alberta Education's policies and practices would be "coordinated to foster, support and sustain career-long teacher education" (1994b). Four significant changes to this initial proposal made through the consultation phase are illustrative of the influence of research, the openness to collaboration and attention to the political vicissitudes: (1) elimination of the section of the proposal to issue five-year renewable teaching licenses; (2) redrafting of the original 44 KSAs into the 11 descriptors of the *Teaching Quality Standard;* (3) rewriting the teacher evaluation portion of the policy in response to a major 1993 provincial research study; and (4) incorporation of the concept of teacher supervision and instructional leadership into the final draft of the policy.

Following internal and external consultation exercises through the 1994-95 school year, the Ministry moved forward with its workplan by widely distributing 8500 copies of *Quality teaching: Quality education for Alberta students,* the government's discussion paper on improving teaching in September of 1995. The accompanying news release read: "Education Minister Halvar Jonson wants teachers, and Albertans to tell him what they think about the changes being proposed to key components of teacher preparation, certification and

evaluation." Accordingly, approximately 290 responses were received over the following two months. These varied from written briefs to comments made during invitational workshops held in each of the two major cities in November of the year. My review of written records and interviews with participants indicates that the Ministry successfully improved the initial proposal through these processes.

It would seem that the choice to eliminate the proposed requirement for five-year renewable teaching licenses was made primarily on the basis of effective political action on the part of the ATA. In this respect, the province had retreated in the face of a previous confrontation with the ATA over the similar issues ten years earlier. Another possibility is that the shift can be accounted for by the incompatibility of the renewable license notion with research on conditions supportive of ongoing professional growth. Redrafting of the original enlarged number of KSAs (49 are noted in the September 28th discussion paper) into the *Teaching Quality Standard* with its accompanying 11 rich descriptors of teaching can largely be attributed to the influence of educational research and conceptions of practice brought to bear by ATA and university representatives.

Significant rewriting of the teacher growth and teacher evaluation portion of the policy also occurred over the course of adoption. This appears to derive chiefly from attentive reading of 1993 provincial research study *Toward Teacher Growth: A Study of the Impact of Alberta's Teacher Evaluation Policy*. This multi-university study commissioned in 1989 as part of the MFP's commitment to evaluate policy outcomes had a significant impact on the policy proposal. Similarly, ATA reports of successful growth-oriented evaluation practices being utilized in several jurisdictions across the province also had impact.

By the time the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* policy became adopted, the supervision portion of the policy had become a key piece of what the ATA was now referring to as an enlightened and professional policy statement. The following quotations are illustrative of the Association's enthusiasm:

> Supervision is a fundamental component of the policy and is pivotal to its success.
>
> (2001, p. 3)

> Supervision refers to activities related to instructional improvement and teacher growth occurring within the broad context of schooling. Supervision is concerned with such issues as school organizational patterns and school climates that promote and facilitate teaching and learning, educational program development and articulation and other issues of leadership as they are related to instructional improvement.
>
> (2001, p. 10)

Incorporation of the concepts of teacher supervision and instructional leadership into the final draft of the policy seems to have resulted from feedback received during the consultation process indicating possible confusion over the terms formative and summative evaluation. In a compromise blending of intentions supervision as a term in the final policy seems to have taken

on meanings from two earlier used terms: (1) ongoing monitoring and (2) formative evaluation. In the final policy wording both supervision and instructional leadership are used. Procedures for "ongoing supervision" are limited to three activities on the part of the principal:

(a) providing support and guidance to teachers;
(b) observing and receiving information from any source about the quality of teaching a teacher provides to students; and
(c) identifying the behaviors or practices of a teacher that for any reason may require an evaluation.

Additional examples of the Ministry's openness and willingness to collaborate are evident throughout the adoption stage. Members of stakeholder groups indicate that they felt heard and that the process created real opportunities for policy actors to share and learn form one another. This adoption stage seems to provide evidence that policy learning of the endogenous sort as noted in the review portion of this paper can function to produce desired outcomes. Attention now shifts to an overall assessment of the *Teacher Growth and Evaluation* policy.

LESSONS DRAWN

This paper has begun to tell the story of the Alberta's 1998 *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* policy. A preliminary vignette of its early life and recent ancestry have been traced through the origins and adoption dimensions of Levin's policy framework. For the most part this is a story of continuity and learning. Policy directions established nearly twenty years ago were updated and rapidly adopted. Leadership within the Ministry took advantage of the political opportunity to act more swiftly and more broadly on several contemplated changes to teacher education, certification and evaluation that had been making gradual headway up to the 1993 election of the new premier. Once the "policy window" (Kingdon, 1990, cited in Levin, 2001, p. 66) opened, initial ideas were discussed, altered and improved through structured multi-stakeholder interaction. Recent relevant research, successes from the field and political contingencies were taken into account. Through deliberate, focussed and authentic consultation strategies, the thoughts and ideas of a wide range of mostly professional policy actors were gathered and systematically incorporated into *An Integrated Framework to Enhance the Quality of Teaching in Alberta.* Taken together these characteristics of the policy narrative provide evidence in support of the claim that endogenous policy learning or lesson-drawing was evident.

In addition to this image of policy-change as learning, a reform as capacity building metaphor is also discernable in this story. When the adoption process used to generate *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* policy is the compared to research-based conceptions of successful reform it stands up very well. These pictures of an open and interactive policy sub-system in the foreground have been presented against a contrasting backdrop of reform as mandate, politics as perception management and public services as commodities in the marketplace. What images of teaching and supervision are discernable?

For the most part images of professionalism are evident. When measured against the OECD literature on enhancing quality teaching, the Alberta framework does well. A closer analysis of

the *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* policy itself leads one to similar conclusions. Descriptors used in the policy statement present a clear image of teaching as "complex and context-dependent" to use the words of Darling-Hammond and Sclan (1993, pp. 24-25). In contrast to this teacher as professional image, however, are policy references that imply teacher as technician and even teacher as labor images. Similarly, the most complete image evoked by the policy statement is the supervisor as professional. On the basis of one short phrase -- "providing support and guidance to teachers" -- a supervisor as teacher metaphor is also apparent. Nevertheless, the policy also contains images that are more inspectorial and bureaucratic. When evaluating the policy in terms of what the literature informs about effective evaluation, it scores well again. Separate tracks are identified for novices, tenured teachers and for those in difficulty. Not only is competence assumed, but so, too, is the requirement for ongoing professional learning included.

This paper closes on a normative note with the salient value claim supported by this study. If there is one lesson to be drawn from my inquiry into the origins and adoption of Alberta's *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* policy it is that this policy serves as an exemplary model for future educational reform. Under the leadership of the key officials in Ministry of Learning, representatives of the teachers' association, the superintendents' group, the universities and trustees associations succeeded in conceiving of, developing and adopting a forward-looking and collaborative approach to teacher growth, supervision and teacher evaluation. In so doing the Ministry embarked on a path more likely to achieve positive learning results. It is hoped that it will continue steps in this direction, thereby heeding the advice of two eminent Canadian policy researchers, Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan (1998):

> If governments are really interested in substantial improvements for all students, they must engage with the evidence regarding reform strategies which really do deepen and make a difference to student learning and avoid self-defeating strategies which, despite repeated use, have had virtually no positive effects at all in the past. Government leaders who recognize the power of capacity-building strategies, along with frameworks of accountability, will achieve significantly more change 'on the ground' than those that employ distant hierarchical methods of compliance
>
> (p. 121)

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